

Rediscovery of *Lipinia macrotympanum* (Stoliczka, 1873) from the Nicobar Islands, India

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Abstract.— Stoliczka's (1873) *Mocoo macrotympanum*, known from the holotype collected over 120 years ago from the Andaman Islands, India, is redescribed on the basis of two specimens from Little and Great Nicobar Islands, India. The species is diagnosed by: small body size (SVL up to 38.1 mm); tympanum exposed; disk on lower eyelid translucent; prefrontals separate; the failure of the adpressed hind limbs to meet the fore limbs; 21–23 smooth midbody scale rows; 15–17 subdigital scansors under toe IV; three pairs of nuchals; four supraoculars; seven supralabials (supralabial V in midorbit position); six infralabials; and lateral bands starting from the nostrils.

Key words.— *Lipinia macrotympanum*, Sauria, Scincidae, Great Nicobar, Little Nicobar, India.



Figure 1. *Lipinia macrotympanum* (MCZ R-176760) from Pulo Ulan (07° 03'N; 93° 35'E), Little Nicobar, India, in life.

Introduction

Mocoo macrotympanum was described by Stoliczka (1873), based on a single example from “South Andaman....on a sandy beach in Macpherson's Straits” (11° 31'N; 92° 39'E), which lie between South Andamans and Rutland Island, that was deposited in the collection of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, in Calcutta. The holotype is now in the collection of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI 5571). No further examples of this distinctive species have come to light. In Mittleman's (1952) synopsis of scincids, the species was assigned to the genus *Scincella*, although Greer (1974) subsequently placed Stoliczka's species in the genus *Lipinia*, now known to include 20 nominal species (Austin, 1995; Greer, 1974; Greer and Mys, 1987) that are diagnosable by their small (SVL 56 mm) size, generally slender body, lack of a postorbital

bone and a dorsal color pattern of striking light, and dark longitudinal stripes. Their distribution includes the insular regions of south-east Asia, including the Sundas east to the Philippines, New Guinea, with one species (*L. noctua*) reaching Polynesia, further east (see Fig. 45 in Greer, 1974, and Fig. 8 in Zweifel, 1979) that is suspected to be spread through human agencies (Greer, 1989). Only one species (*L. vittigera*) has been recorded from the Asian mainland (Greer, 1974).

The collection of an example (Fig. 1) of *Lipinia macrotympanum* during field work conducted in the Nicobars in 1994 and an examination of another Nicobarese specimen (from Great Nicobar), referred to *Sphenomorphus quadrivittatum*, although with some hesitation, by Biswas and Sanyal (1977), provide an opportunity to both enlarge the description of